



INSPECTOR GENERAL REPORT

2005-08-0407

December 12, 2005

SBDC FORGERY

Inspector General David O. Thomas reports to Governor Mitchell E. Daniels, Jr., after an investigation by Special Agent Darrell Boehmer, as follows:

This case involves a forgery where the victim was the Director of the Indiana Small Business Development Center ("SBDC").

On August 11, 2005, Executive Director Debbie Trocha of the SBDC reported that her name had been forged by an Elizabeth Thompson. Thompson was seeking assistance from the SBDC in her attempt to establish a small business in Marion, Indiana. Director Trocha presented a copy of the forged letter which was dated July 10, 2005. The letter was allegedly written and signed by Director Trocha as an appeal to a local bank for further financing for Elizabeth Thompson. The letter was also on what appeared to be SBDC stationery and indicated that SBDC had approved a \$25,000 loan for Thompson. Director Trocha reported that SBDC never granted loans, the letter was a forgery and that the signature was not

hers.

Special Agent Darrell Boehmer conducted the investigation and confirmed the initial information Director Trocha had provided. His investigation revealed that Elizabeth Thompson had applied to SBDC for counseling assistance on April 21, 2005. Elizabeth Thompson wanted to purchase a restaurant in Marion, Indiana, and thought SBDC could assist her in that pursuit.

Special Agent Boehmer then conducted an interview with a local realtor involved in the purchase of the restaurant by Elizabeth Thompson. This realtor provided Special Agent Boehmer with the original forged letter, and confirmed that Elizabeth Thompson had presented it to her as a letter written by Director Trocha in Elizabeth Thompson's pursuit of purchasing the restaurant.

The investigation further revealed three facts alleged in the letter which corroborated the original report by Director Trocha that the letter had been forged. First, SBDC does not give loans as alleged in the letter. Second, it was determined that Director Trocha had never met Elizabeth Thompson, though the letter reported to be authored by Director Trocha on behalf of Elizabeth Thompson. Third, although the letter purported to be on SBDC stationery, it was not, and instead used a fabricated letterhead.

To further the investigation, Special Agent Boehmer obtained hand writing samples of the signature of Director Trocha for comparison with the signature on the forged letter. Five comparison SBDC documents authored and signed by Director Trocha before the date of the forged letter were obtained. It was obvious upon a visual inspection and comparison that the signatures on the

five comparison documents were identical to each other, and obviously distinct from the signature on the forged letter.

These facts were submitted to the Grant County Prosecuting Attorney where criminal charges of forgery, a class C felony, were then filed.

Dated this 12th day of December, 2005.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "David O. Thomas". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

David O. Thomas, Inspector General